

[PREFACE]

In August of 1985, a graduate student in history who was planning to write a doctoral dissertation on Dr. Clifford Drury's work as a historian said in a letter to me, "I stand in awe of his scholarship." In reply I mentioned that I, too, stand in awe of his scholarship. It was expended over a 49 year period of time, recording and interpreting the work of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, Presbyterians, and the other Presbyterian and Congregational missionaries of the Oregon Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, who settled in what is now Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho in 1836 and 1838. My father's second book on the Old Oregon missionaries was *Marcus Whitman, M. D., Pioneer and Martyr*, published in 1937. This first edition was extensively revised and enlarged in a two volume set, *Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and the Opening of Old Oregon*, published in 1973. It was his greatest and most significant work, a definitive history unlikely to be superseded, and which is now reprinted in this set by the Whitman Mission National Historic Site Branch of the Pacific Northwest National Parks and Forests Association. Altogether, there were twelve volumes published about the missionaries of the Oregon Mission, from 1936 through 1976, and I have counted 24 pamphlet and journal articles in my father's, *My Road from Yesterday—an Autobiography*, directly relating to these missionaries. Of course all of this written material is closely interrelated. The written legacy of careful scholarship is a permanent testimony to the gifts and work of Dr. Clifford M. Drury in this specialized area of American Westward expansion and missionary history.

In the summer of 1934 he taught a Bible class for the Presbyterian Nez Perces at Talmaks, their summer camp in the foothills of the Bitter Root Mountains in North Central Idaho. It was there that his interest was awakened in the work of the original Presbyterian missionaries to the Nez Perce and other nearby Indian tribes. Although only nine years old, I still remember the earnest discussion and questions my father

had with several at Talmak on these missionaries. Discussion was soon translated into action, with research first made into the lives and work of the Rev. and Mrs. Henry Harmon Spalding, then the Whitmans. I remember taking field trips with my father where he sought out material for books and articles he would write. He had the necessary qualifications for all his many labors in this field: boundless energy and enthusiasm for his subjects; a doctoral dissertation in history; an ability to collect, sort out, evaluate and organize an extensive and complex array of information from many sources; and a drive to write and carry through to publication the carefully organized results of his labors. He did not have an outstanding voice for public speaking, but he was able to hold and increase the interest of his audiences because of his enthusiasm for the Old Oregon missionaries, his knowledge of almost all of the known facts of their lives and legacy, and his personal charisma. He seemed to be always on the go, studying research material, lecturing, writing, etc., and it comes as no surprise to those who knew him that he found it difficult to relax.

Dr. Clifford M. Drury was born on an Iowa farm near Early, Iowa, on November 7, 1897. He had a farm and small town background through his college years. He graduated from Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, Iowa, in 1918. After a brief period in the Army, and other activities in Iowa, he studied at the San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California, where he graduated in 1922. Also in that year, he married Miriam Leyrer and was ordained as a minister of the Presbyterian Church. The years 1923 to 1927 were spent in China where he was pastor of the interdenominational American Community Church in Shanghai. The academic year 1927–1928 was spent at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland where he worked on his doctorate. A pastorate in Moscow, Idaho, was accepted and in this decade to 1938, the first two works on Old Oregon missionaries were published. The years from 1938 to his retirement in 1963 were very busy and productive, first as Professor of Church History at the San Francisco Theological Seminary, then as Chaplain in the United States

Navy during the war years, then back to his Church History Professor position. Sixteen books were published during these years, including a six volume narrative and statistical set, *History of the Chaplain Corps*. The retirement years, November, 1963, to near the time of his death on April 18, 1984, in Pasadena, California, were also busy and productive, with part-time teaching at the interdenominational Fuller Theological Seminary, with eight published books and his last book, *My Road from Yesterday—an Autobiography*, in the process of being published.

The Whitman Mission National Historic Site is a registered historic site with the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This recognition was given to the Whitman Mission National Historic Site by the Presbyterian Historical Society in 1983. Many of the details of the Whitman Missionaries and their mission were first made known to the public through the books and articles of Dr. Clifford M. Drury, and it is fitting that his great contributions be remembered during the 150th anniversary of the Whitmans' arrival in the Walla Walla Valley. The Sesquicentennial planned for 1986 will be a special year designed and proclaimed by Walla Walla County and City, and by the City of College Place, to be a year of special celebrations honoring the Whitmans' many contributions and the history of the Walla Walla Valley.

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